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SUBJECT: CHANGES IN GOV FOREIGN MINISTRY

CLASSIFIED BY: ABELARDO A. ARIAS, POLITICAL COUNSELOR,
FOR REASONS 1.4(B) AND (D)

SUMMARY

1. (C) FOREIGN MINISTER ROY CHADERTON CONFIRMED REPORTS ON JANUARY 20 THAT ADAN CHAVEZ, PRESIDENT CHAVEZ'S OLDER BROTHER, WILL BE THE NEW GOV AMBASSADOR TO CUBA. SOURCES AT THE MFA CONFIRM THAT CHADERTON WILL BE REPLACED BY JESUS ARNALDO PEREZ, CURRENT GOV AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE, AND RUMORED TO BE CHAVEZ'S ILLEGITIMATE HALF-BROTHER. CHADERTON IS ALSO RUMORED TO REPLACE PEREZ AS GOV AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE. END SUMMARY.

ANOTHER CHAVEZ IN HAVANA

2. (U) ON JANUARY 20, ROY CHADERTON CONFIRMED REPORTS THAT ADAN CHAVEZ, BROTHER OF PRESIDENT CHAVEZ, WILL BE THE NEW GOV AMBASSADOR TO CUBA, REPLACING JULIO MONTES, WHO HAS BEEN IN HAVANA SINCE 2000. ADAN CHAVEZ IS A FORMER UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR, HAS HAD HIGH POSITIONS IN THE RULING PARTY MVR, AND HAS A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS BROTHER. HE WILL LEAVE HIS JOB AS THE PRESIDENT'S CHIEF OF STAFF, WHICH HE ASSUMED IN 2003, AFTER 1 1/2 YEARS AS HEAD OF THE NATIONAL LAND INSTITUTE (INTI). PRESIDENT CHAVEZ ANNOUNCED ON JANUARY 25 THAT MONTES WILL FILL A NEW ROLE IN MIRAFLORES AS COORDINATOR FOR SOCIAL PROGRAMS.

FLIPPING CHADERTON FOR PEREZ

3. (C) JESUS ARNALDO PEREZ, GOV AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE, AND ROY CHADERTON, GOV FOREIGN MINISTER, WILL EXCHANGE JOBS. PEREZ HAS BEEN POSTED IN PARIS SINCE JUNE 2002, WITH A PREVIOUS POSTING AS GOV AMBASSADOR TO ALGERIA FROM 2001 TO 2002. BEFORE JOINING THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, PEREZ SERVED AS MINISTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES FROM 1999 TO 2000. PEREZ, AN ACADEMIC, RECEIVED HIS PH.D. IN GEOGRAPHY IN 1994 AND TWO MASTER'S DEGREES IN THE 1980S. HE HAS HAD JOBS IN ACADEMIA AS A PROFESSOR AND IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANT. HE HAS LIVED IN FRANCE FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS, AND ONLY BRIEFLY IN VENEZUELA WHEN HE WAS MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT. ANOTHER MFA OFFICIAL TOLD US THAT PEREZ IS, AS RUMORED, CHAVEZ'S ILLEGITIMATE HALF-BROTHER. CHADERTON TOLD DAS DESHAZO ON JANUARY 22 THAT HE WILL REPLACE PEREZ AS GOV AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE.

COMMENT

4. (C) ADDITIONAL MEDIA REPORTS INDICATE FURTHER UPHEAVAL IN GOV MINISTRIES, INCLUDING THE ENVIRONMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND LABOR MINISTRIES. CHAVEZ IS ARRANGING OFFICIALS TO CREATE A LOYAL MINISTRIES DURING UPCOMING DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL BATTLES. WITH BROTHER ADAN IN HAVANA AND PEREZ AS GOV FOREIGN MINISTER, CHAVEZ IS MOVING THE FOREIGN POLICY MACHINERY CLOSER TO HIM, WITH PEOPLE HE TRUSTS AND WHOSE LOYALTY IS FAMILIAL; HE IS ALSO STRENGTHENING THE TIES TO CUBA.
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